

Narrator:

For World AIDS Day 2009, America.gov spoke with Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, also known as PEPFAR. We took questions from America.gov's Facebook page. Leslie wanted to know why one-quarter of the 4.6 million HIV-infected people in Africa are receiving anti-retroviral therapy and how PEPFAR is addressing this problem.

Ambassador Eric Goosby:

Well, those numbers are a little underreporting the burden. There's 33 million people on the planet with HIV. 27 million – 27 million – are in sub-Saharan Africa. Of those 27 million, we have treated with the Global Fund and PEPFAR about 4.3 million. So that's probably where's she's got her 4.6 is my guess. What we're doing about it is trying to work with our partner countries to identify testing strategies for HIV-positive people and take the HIV-positive person and put them into care and services. Then we include HAART therapy. We're also trying to very aggressively scale up our prevention attempts to prevent people from getting infected. Prevention activities are difficult to put in place; they have to be sustained in that I can convince you not to participate in high-risk behavior today, but we have to reinforce that message. Prevention strategies have to be constant, repetitive; you need to target individuals who continue to participate in high-risk behaviors, be persistent with it for years to maintain the impact. It's different than treatment.